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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/ARPI, NEA/PPD, NEA/P, INR/R/MR

LONDON FOR GOLDRICH
PARIS FOR ZEYA
USCENTCOM FOR PLUSH
FOREIGN PRESS CENTER/ASILAS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: ABU GHRAIB SENTENCES, REGIONAL
RELATIONS, AND LEBANESE UNITY

Slap On The Wrist

[1](#)1. On May 7, the government-owned Arabic daily "Oman" carried an editorial entitled, "Rewards for the Abu Ghraib Scandals":

"The trials of the American military officers involved in the Abu Ghraib prison scandal passed almost unnoticed by the Arabs, as if nothing had ever happened. The paltry punishment -- a mere demotion in rank -- handed down to the female general in charge of the prison suggests that she made a deal with prosecutors, in which she would receive a light sentence in return for not naming names. Ironically, during the latter days of Saddam's reign, prisons such as Abu Ghraib were trotted out by the Americans as examples of Saddam's tyranny and brutality. Can we honestly say that the human rights situation for Iraqis has improved, when they are sent to these prisons without charges and are subjected to such degrading abuse?"

Region Of Brotherly Love

[1](#)2. An editorial entitled, "A Model of Relations Between Brothers" appeared in "Oman" on May 8:

"No one should underestimate the importance of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos' visit to Qatar and Egypt. The region is experiencing rapid and profound changes which will impact the entire international community. It is crucial for the countries in this part of the world to work together for peace, and to protect the security and stability of the region. The brotherly relationship that exists between Oman, Qatar, and Egypt is a model for how countries should behave towards each other."

Internal Affairs

[1](#)3. "Oman" also published an editorial on May 9 under the headline, "The Importance of Lebanese Unity":

"Syria's withdrawal gives Lebanon an opportunity to solve their internal issues. The return of Aoun should be used to further the reconciliation between factions. Therefore, the focus should be on strengthening Lebanon's internal unity -- not on getting carried away by temporary emotional slogans. The Lebanese people deserve political stability and economic development, unhindered by personal political interests."

BALTIMORE